

Aspire and Persevere

by Coach Frank DiCocco

Aspire and Persevere: those words are the motto of my high school alma mater. It is a very simple slogan and one that is highly effective. The idea is very straightforward: set a high goal, and then work as hard as you can to accomplish it.

In a lot of ways, that motto is more like an equation than anything else: in order for it to work properly, you have to balance both aspects of it. What I mean, is that the degree of perseverance has to match the degree of aspiration. In other words, you have to make the level of your work ethic match the level of your expectations.

On the playing field, we used to say “aspire and perspire.” That was our way of stressing the importance of hard work. It reminded us that wishing was not doing, and that ultimately, goals don’t reach themselves, objectives don’t achieve themselves, and potential doesn’t fulfill itself.

High expectations are great. But the truth is that championship expectations don’t mean a thing unless you have a championship work ethic to go along with them. Anyone can talk about achieving success; any team can talk about winning games, going to playoffs, and winning championships. But the people and the teams that actually go out and succeed in this world, are the ones whose work ethic and commitment match their expectations.

...Life is never going to just give you something without you having to earn it. What life will give you, however, is an opportunity to work your butt off in order to go after what you want. Whether you make the most of that opportunity or not, is up to you.

What's for certain, is that talk is cheap, and dreams don't put points on the scoreboard. It is not the wishing, but the doing, that turns expectations into reality. The day-in and day-out commitment, the continuous sacrifice, and the persistent effort are ultimately the things that make the difference.

In the end, it's not about what you want to achieve. It's about what you are willing to go out and earn. All the aspiration in the world means nothing without an equal or greater amount of perspiration. When it comes to Friday nights and playoff games — or really anything in life — one thing holds true: you will always get what you earn.

